COCHIN
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION, 1119

Monday, *the* *13th December 1943.*
27th Vrischigam 1119.

The Council met in the Council Hall, Ernakulam, at half past eleven of the clock with the Hon'ble the President (SIR G. T. BOAG, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.) in the Chair.

Messrs. Khan Sahib Y. Muhammad Roshan Sahib Bahadur (Commissioner of Police), C. Kunhan Nambudiripad, V. J. Mathai, P. P. Devassi, A. L. Antony and B. M. Peter were absent.

Swearing in of the President and the new members

The Diwan President Sir G. T. Boag and Messrs. B. V. K. Menon (Joint Secretary to Government, Judicial and Public Works), S. Venkiteswaran (Conservator of Forests) and P. Narayana Menon (Member for Trippunittura) were sworn in.

Opening Statement by the President

Mr. President: Hon'ble Members of the Legislative Council, it is my pleasant duty to convey to this House a gracious message from His Highness the Maharaja. It is as follows.—

"Members of the Cochin Legislative Council, it is with the greatest pleasure that I welcome the first meeting of the Legislative Council which assembles since my accession. The Council plays an important part in the constitution of the State, and I shall always follow its proceedings with the deepest interest and give to its decisions the most careful considerations".

Honourable Members,

Since the Council last met the State has suffered a grievous loss in the death of His Highness the late Maharaja. Hon'ble Members will wish an opportunity to give expression to their feelings on this sad occasion, and accordingly the business before the Council today is a motion which will shortly be made by the Hon'ble Minister placing on record the Council's sorrow at the death of His late Highness and its sympathy with the members of the Ruling Family in their loss.

I had not the privilege of knowing His late Highness; I cannot speak from my own knowledge of his qualities as a man and a Ruler; but I have read some passages in which my predecessor has spoken of those qualities; and I shall confine my remarks this morning to the quotation of one of those passages. Mr. Dixon said: "The welfare of his subjects is His Highness' constant care. To this he has dedicated himself, to this he devotes his wide knowledge and keen insight. Indeed the noble simplicity of His Highness' own private life is remarkable. It is a great privilege to serve under such a Ruler". That a Ruler who earned such a tribute from his Diwan won also the affection and esteem of his subjects is not surprising; and it is in the fitness of things that this Council should spend its sitting today in paying its tribute to the memory of the late Maharaja.

I now call upon the Hon'ble Minister to move the condolence motion.

Condolence Motion on the demise of His Highness Sir Sree Kerala Varma G. C. I. E., the Maharaja of Cochin

Mr. T. K. Nayar *(Minister for Rural Development):* Mr. President, Sir, it is my melancholy duty to move the following motion on the sad demise of His Highness Sir Sree Kerala Varma, our late Maharaja.—

"This Council desires to express, with due respect, its deep sense of sorrow at the irreparable loss sustained by the State by the lamented demise of His Highness Sir Sree Kerala Varma, G. C. I. E., the late Maharaja of Cochin, and its sincere sympathy with His Highness the Maharaja and other members of the Ruling Family and His late Highness' children, in their sad bereavement."

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I do not think that a long speech is necessary or called for on this occasion to commend this motion for the unanimous acceptance of this House. During the short period of His Highness' rule, Cochin with the rest of India had to face a serious situation—shortage of food materials—caused by the fall of Burma into enemy hands. To meet this unprecedented calamity, as we are all aware, His Highness was doing everything possible. The successful introduction of the rationing scheme and the other measures taken up under the guidance of His Highness for the fair and equitable distribution of food supplies among the people are well-known throughout India, and Cochin has thus set an example for other States and Provinces to follow. To meet this critical situation the Grow More Food Campaign was launched and thousands of acres of lands left uncultivated have been brought under cultivation. Ameliorative measures of far-reaching consequences were initiated at the instance of His Highness for the social and economic prosperity of His Highness' subjects. Of these, the Verumpattamdars' Act enacted to safeguard the interests of and to give fixity of tenure to the ordinary lessees needs special mention as it really is their "Magna Carta". In the mighty effort of the United Nations to save life and civilization against the Axis onslaught His Highness was contributing to the utmost extent with men, money and materials. Under the fostering care of His Highness, who was himself a renowned Specialist in the treatment of poison cases, the Ayurvedic system of treatment made considerable progress. Saintly simplicity and unostentatious living were the principal keynotes of His Highness' character. The welfare of his subjects down to the poorest and most insignificant was His Highness' constant care. In the sad demise of His Highness, Cochin has lost a great and noble Ruler.

May his soul rest in peace!

Mr. Joseph Pettah *(Adur)*: Mr. President, Sir, I rise to support the condolence motion which has been placed before this House by the Hon'ble Leader of the House and in doing so I beg on behalf of the Unionist Party in this House to associate myself with all those sentiments of love and loyalty, of respectful appreciation and grateful thanks which the Hon'ble Leader has expressed in moving that resolution. Grand old man that His Gracious Highness was, he nevertheless brought to the throne a strong and virile mind of mature experience, an intellect seasoned and broadened with wide reading and a will inflexible, unbending. Of him it can be said that not only he reigned, but he also ruled. Some people, of course, actuated by feelings of sympathy are inclined to deplore and to bewail the many, according to them, unfortunate things which have been crowded into the short span of His Highness' reign. But I would take a more optimistic view of things and in the words of His Holiness Pope Pius XI when he referred to similar circumstances in a world-famed Encyclical I would say it is a privilege for a man to live in stirring times when history is made, so that he can do some service to his fellow-beings and also leave an indelible impression on the course of history by his self-sacrificing efforts and his spirited labour. In that way His Highness, I should think, was very fortunate in living in these days with so many of the so-called insurmountable obstacles to surmount, and which he did surmount to a very large extent indeed. The very many things to which we are indebted to His Gracious Highness have been briefly referred to by the Hon'ble Leader of the House and I do not want to repeat the same here, but I would just emphasise one or two things. I said it is a privilege for a man to be living in stirring times when history is made and His Highness has indeed made history. That great Act, for which he has been responsible, the Verumpatta Kudiyan Bill, has got very, very far-reaching effects, in fact it is a turning point, it is an epoch-making thing in the history of Cochin. And in so doing, Cochin has set an example to the rest of India and I should say even to the rest of the world. Not only on humanitarian principles, but also on principles of agricultural efficiency and wise statesmanship, giving security of tenure to these verumpattamdars has been admitted by all wise men, by all thinking men, to be a very desirable feature of rural economy. But it is in few other States that they have had the financial courage and foresight to embark on such a measure. The measure is very far-reaching in its consequences, very comprehensive also. It extends to the whole of Cochin and to the large majority of the subjects of His Highness. Then again we have had very many instances to show that His Highness was setting his face definitely against any displays or demonstrations and diverting all that money to the help of the poor. In fact, his keen solicitude for the poor was a very well-known trait of his character, and in accordance with that spirit, he also lived the life of the poorest man. The simplicity, the unostentatious way of his living was so very well-known. He likened himself to one among the poor and in that way he was not only a patron, but also a friend and associate of the poor. All honour to his great memory, and all sympathy to the bereaved family of His Highness the Gracious Maharaja.

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Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar *(Nellayi)*: Sir, I beg to associate myself with all that had been said by the Hon'ble Minister. It is barely 100 days since I had the privilege and honour of moving a resolution congratulating His Highness the late Maharaja on the conferment of G.C.I.E. on His Highness by His Imperial Majesty the King Emperor. Little did I dream then that within so short a time His Highness would pass away leaving the State which he ruled and the subjects whom he loved in profound sorrow and deep mourning. In the demise of His Highness Cochin has lost one of the most versatile and gifted of her rulers. During the short period of two years that His Highness had been ruler of this ancient and historic State His Highness had given unmistakable proof of his wide knowledge of men and things, of administrative skill, of unbounded love for his subjects and His Highness had in consequence commanded the unstinted loyalty and devotion of his numerous subjects. I do not think it necessary here to recount the various measures of reform and administrative advance that had marked His Highness' rule. They are all fresh in our minds. His Highness had ever held aloft the high ideals of this State and of Hindu States in general and His Highness' life would ever be an inspiration and an ideal for all his successors. I request you, Sir, to convey to the Members of the Ruling Family our feelings of sorrow at the great loss which they have sustained by His Highness' demise. Our hearts go to His Highness' children in sorrow and in sympathy at the double loss which they have sustained in the deaths of an illustrious father and that of their mother the late Netyaramma, the great minded and gifted lady who was held in very high esteem by the people of this State and was the idol and the ideal of the women of Cochin.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi)*: Sir, I beg to associate with all that has been said by the Hon'ble Leader of the House on this motion. His Highness the Maharaja before he ascended the throne had gained a great reputation by his skill in Vishavaidya and he was one of the greatest Vishavaidyas in the whole of India. He was a great financier and also a great scholar. After His Highness ascended the throne, the war became more intensified and our State contributed all its resources for the success of the United Nations. In money, men and material I should think, no State or Province in India has contributed more than our State when we consider the small size and the population of our State. I am only sorry that Almighty God has not been pleased to give one year more to His Highness in this world so that His Highness would have seen the victory of the Allies and the United Nations. His Highness would have shed tears of joy at the crushing defeat, unconditional defeat of the Axis. May his soul rest in peace!

Mr. K. M. Ibrahim *(Cranganur)*: Mr. President, Sir, words are few when the heart is full; whatever can be said in appreciation of His late Highness has been exhausted by the Hon'ble Members who preceded me. One aspect alone I would like to emphasise and it is that our beloved late lamented Maharaja can rightly be called a "Defence King". He ascended the Musnad when the war was at a critical stage and it is a pity he has passed away before the sure and final victory has been won. As one of the Hon'ble Members said when compared with our very neighbourhood of British Malabar, the various contributions made by the Government of the late Maharaja compares favourably. And it is very well known that His Highness has exerted his personal influence to make the State war-minded from the point of view of both money and men. All his amelioration measures have already been referred to and I don't think there is any occasion to expatiate on them. I only pray that his soul rest in peace and offer my condolence to the bereaved family.

Mr. Ephraim Ouseph *(Narakkal)*: Sir, I wish to associate myself with the sentiments expressed on the sad demise of our beloved Maharaja, who was the worthy son of an ancient and glorious dynasty, an authentic representative of a great constitutional ideal-monarchy.

I wish, Sir, with the permission of this House to make a few observations on the loss the State has sustained in the passing away of one of its greatest rulers and scholars of modern times.

His Highness was recognised, even from boyhood, to be so truly a king amongst men, as to earn the pet-name Midukkan Thampuran, the smart Prince.

A keen head for business, a surprising talent for finance and a remarkable flair for public affairs were so unusually combined in His Highness with the cultured mind of a modern servant and orientalist. Learned in the wisdom of his generation, the amazing intellectual range and alertness of His Highness has a lesson for us with our dangerously little knowledge gathered from the superficial wisdom of newspapers.

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His Highness was, in addition, a reputed authority on Ayurveda, in fact the greatest specialist on snake poisoning. His favourite hobby was snatching away life from the very jaws of death, unlike the fashionable hobby of autocracy which says "away with his head".

As a statesman, His Highness was a believer in the golden mean, after the manner of Aristotle and Aquinas. The wide distribution of wealth and political influence, implied in the middle class ownership of Verumpattam tenants, was consciously encouraged not only as an effective safeguard against revolutionary tendencies but also as a progressive realisation of the ideal of social justice. The Verumpattam Act, despite its faults, has proved to be a charter of rights for the real tillers of the soil. In thousands of cottage homes it has kindled a new sense of security, a new hope and courage which will stand foursquare against the black-mail of wicked karyastans, the niggardly response of the soil and the monstrous vagaries of the monsoons.

His Highness has indicated by precept and example, an ideal of aristocracy as the natural leaders of the people in culture and virtue, rather than as a vicious set of plutocratic parasites. His rigorous insistence on plain living and high thinking reminds one of the guardian class in Plato's Republic.

His Highness was of a naturally cautious and conservative disposition; but the overriding consideration of the acute food shortage and the urgency of his love for his poor subjects goaded him on to embark on the greatest administrative adventure ever tried in India. I refer to the universal and comprehensive scheme of food rationing, the only one of its kind in India, yet.

The generous contribution in men and money made from the limited resources of this small State is, in a very real sense, a measure of His Highness' devotion to the allied cause of democracy and social justice. His Highness like his illustrious ancestors fully realised that the Government must be based, in Laski's words, "on the widest area of experience" and those who are excluded from power are also excluded from the benefits thereof. Unfortunately His Highness was unable to further the cause of democracy by associating his subjects in the Government in a fuller measure, because of the inevitable pre-occupations of the war.

His Highness dedicated his resources to the Kuladaivam and faithfully discharged the stewardship of the people as a religious duty. Living a frugal life like the humblest of his subjects, he thought and planned the welfare of the subjects in the silent watches of the night and the waking hours of the morning.

Behind the gold and ermine, the regalia and the robes of State, there lived a true Sanyasi, superior to the way of all flesh, detached from its cravings and affections for material things, of which Aldous Huxely and Thomas A. Kempis speak.

As in life, His Highness was calm and conscious to the last. A meritorious cycle is complete in the upward spiral of Karma. At the noontide on that Wednesday there passed from amongst us an illustrious father of the people, a true Rajarshi, a real "philosopher king".

Mr. N. V. Subbarayan Chettiyar *(Nominated)*: Sir, on behalf of the Tamil Non-Brahmins whom I represent in the Council I express my heartfelt condolence for the sad demise of Sir Sree Kerala Varma, G.C.I.E., the late Maharaja of Cochin who had been ruling the Country for more than two years. During the period of His Highness' regime when the whole world was facing all the evils of the war especially in the matter of obtaining food materials for the people His Highness took the bold step of introducing rationing throughout the State and thus food materials are supplied, to all the rich and the poor in the State alike without any distinction. May His Highness' soul rest in peace for ever in heaven.

Mr. P. K. Krishnan *(Nominated)* The sad demise of His Highness, the late Maharaja of Cochin, Sir Sree Kerala Varma, G.C.I.E., has undoubtedly plunged the people of Cochin into a sea of real regret and profound sorrow. Though His Highness' reign was very short, it was attended with all round progress and development and it has left indelible marks upon the glorious history of Cochin.

We can remember that His Highness came to the throne and held the reigns of Government at a critical juncture in our history when the whole State was passing through a period of distress. When our State was shaken to its very foundations and when her people were suffering miserably under the rude shock and irreparable loss caused by the terrible cyclone that followed the accession our benevolent patron and worthy guardian, with an unflinching resolution and firm determination, threw himself heart and soul into the noble task of redressing the grievances and

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ameliorating the conditions of his subjects. We can say with great veneration and adoration and with great gratitude and pride, that His Highness, assisted by his Government, adopted progressive remedial and relief measures to protect and redress the grievances of the people of Cochin. His Highness made his personality and influence keenly felt in the war activities also. He liberally and generously contributed to the War Fund. In this respect this State occupies a unique position among the other States of India.

His Highness, in order to ensure the protection and security of the people of Cochin for all time to come, developed and strengthened the war efforts of Cochin, by successfully and effectively organising the Cochin National War Front, under the inspiring leadership of our Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development, as its leader. In addition to all these our late Highness, with the object of getting over the difficulties and sufferings of the people and to solve the unemployment problem in the State, under the guidance of our venerable Diwan Mr. Dixon, I.C.S., organised the Cochin State Labour Force and large units of people belonging to our State were recruited and were given splendid opportunities and facilities to improve themselves. Thus our late Highness' life was a preparation to improve the conditions of the Depressed Classes, to quicken and invigorate the war efforts, to relieve the distress and grievances of the people of Cochin and solve the unemployment problem in the State. The sad demise of such an affectionate and dutiful guardian and patron has become indeed, a great loss to the people of Cochin.

When the whole of India was groaning under the distress of famine and when the people of Bengal were dying due to the scarcity of food, our late Highness who was full of the milk of human kindness and love for his subjects, saved the people from the scarcity of food by bringing foodgrains from other parts of India. Another most important task undertaken by His late Highness and the noble Government was to solve the food problem of Cochin. In this work, we cannot but remember an Hon'ble Diwan, with deep gratitude and profound veneration. In order to effect equitable distribution of rice and other food grains, depots were opened throughout the State under the guidance of His late Highness and the benevolent Government. The result of all these activities is that when the other States of India are suffering acutely from distress and scarcity of food, our State only remains satisfied. Thus all the activities of His Highness the late Maharaja of Cochin were admirable and commendable. At the demise of such a great personality, as the representative of the Depressed Classes and on behalf of my community, on this occasion, I express my deep sorrow and great regret.

Mr. K. T. Achyutan *(Ezhuvas-Talappalli)*: Mr. President, Sir, I entirely associate myself with all the views expressed by all the members of this House on the sad demise of the late Maharaja. We are all aware that His Highness was one of the best intellects of our State. His Highness had the rare opportunity of experiencing in our State so many conditions and state of affairs and was mature enough even when His Highness took the reigns of government. The one important matter which will alone make His Highness one of the most important personalities of India is the method by which he solved the food problem. We are all aware that in the whole of India the highest and the largest cry is the question of food scarcity. Here in Cochin State His Highness saw in advance all these state of affairs and introduced the rationing scheme by which the whole people of Cochin were given an equitable distribution of the small quantity of rice at our disposal. That one matter itself will make His Highness the memorable figure not only in the State, but throughout India. On behalf of the Ezhuvas of Cochin State—we are aware that His Highness was keenly watching the progress of our community and was seeing to all ways and means by which the progress of our community could be achieved—On behalf of my community also, I fully associate with all the views expressed by the Hon'ble Members.

Mr. A. B. Salem *(Mattancheri)*: Mr. President, Sir, I rise to pay a tribute to the great ruler and in doing so, I don't wish to cover any ground that has already been covered. In His Highness' time, we are happy to remember that the good relationship between Travancore and Cochin has been restored to the advantage of both the States—I should have added to the very happy advantage of both the States; and but for that good relationship perhaps we would have laboured under greater difficulties on the food problem. We are also happy that owing to the circumstances that arose we had in His Highness' time a Diwan who was as His Highness was, a poor man's friend. The best appellation that I could give to His Highness is that he was a poor man's friend. He always wanted the

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under-dog to get a piece of meat to bite and that has underlined all his actions. We had had great calamities in Cochin, we had the cyclone, we had the war, we had the trouble in getting rice and we had the trouble of indebtedness, we had so many other troubles. And in all these, His Highness brought legislation after legislation and in all these the underlying policy was to give relief to the poor man, and therefore he was rightly termed the poor man's friend. I want also to add that His Highness and the Consort were two happy souls who did not separate themselves for long. His Highness went and a few days after the Consort followed. Both quitted the State in quick succession. It is only for happy people that such events occur. With these few words I associate myself in the high tribute that has been paid to His Highness in this Council. May his soul rest in peace!

Mr. H. J. Walmesley *(Nominated):* Mr. President, Sir, the very deep sense of sorrow on the loss of the departed soul had been very eloquently expressed by the Hon'ble Members of the House who already spoke before me. In the loss of the late Maharaja, we have all suffered a very heavy and deep loss and nothing remains for me to say after the speeches delivered here today. His Highness was a great ruler whom it was a privilege to love. He was not only a very wise and farsighted ruler, but above all he was a very good man. He has gone to his reward. May his soul rest in peace!

Motion passed, nem con, the whole House standing as a mark of respect to the late Maharaja

Mr. T. K. Nayar *(Minister for Rural Development):* Sir, I request that the President may be pleased to forward this motion to His Highness the Maharaja and to the children of the late Maharaja and also publish this day's proceedings in the Gazette as usual.

Mr. President: That is allowed. The House will now adjourn till 11-30 a.m. tomorrow.

The House rose at 12-15 p.m. as a mark of respect to the memory of the late Maharaja

N. S. RADHAKRISHNA SARMA

Secretary to the Council

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